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#23

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THE AMAZING

SPIDERMAN



MACKIE
ROMITA JR
HANNA

DIRECT EDITION



59606 04716 1

\$2.25 US \$3.50 CAN

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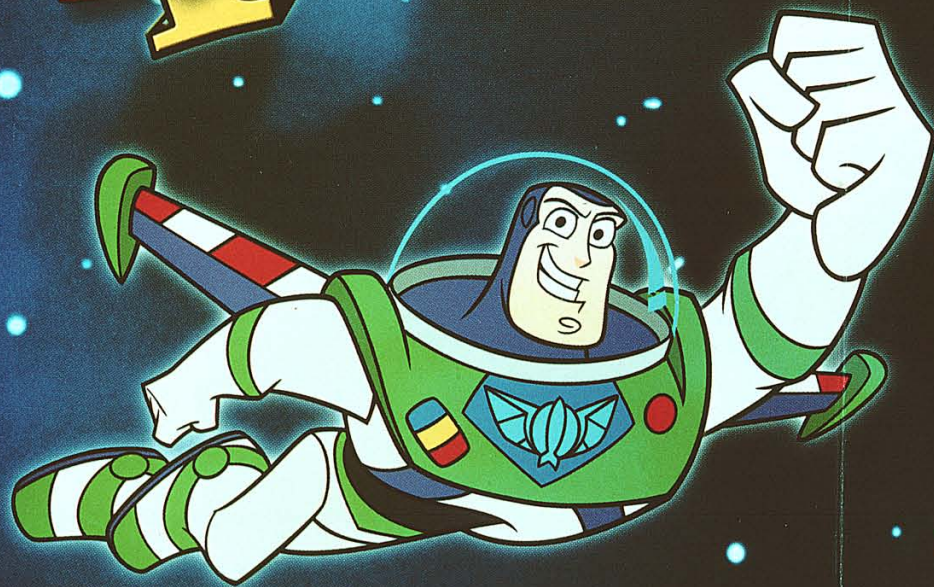
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1 HERO



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1 MISSION



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AT A DEMONSTRATION ON RADIATION, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PETER PARKER WAS BITTEN BY AN IRRADIATED SPIDER FROM WHICH HE LEARNED AN INVALUABLE LESSON: WITH GREAT POWER MUST ALSO COME GREAT RESPONSIBILITY. STAN LEE PRESENTS:

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN!

HOWARD MACKIE JOHN ROMITA JR. SCOTT HANNA

story and art
GREGORY WRIGHT

colors
RS & COMICRAFT
TROY PETERI

letters
RALPH
MACCHIO
editor
BOB HARRAS
chief

THE DISTINGUISHED

GENTLEMAN FROM

NEW YORK

PART TWO

HOW MANY TIMES?

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THE PAST.

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO.

THE MISSION'S BEEN COMPROMISED.

WE WERE SO COCKY AND WALKED RIGHT INTO IT.

WE'D FORGOTTEN THAT HYDRA IS THE MOST DEADLY ESPIONAGE AND TERRORIST OUTFIT ON EARTH.

BETWEEN THE THREE OF US WE HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION IN OUR HEADS TO BRING DOWN ITS ENTIRE EASTERN EUROPEAN OPERATIONS.

THE GOOD NEWS IS HYDRA APPARENTLY WANTS TO KEEP US ALIVE LONG ENOUGH TO EXTRACT THE INFORMATION.

THAT IS NOT GOING TO HAPPEN, ART!

THEN, RANGER, HOW ABOUT WE START BY STICKING TO ASSIGNED CODE-NAMES.

YES, SIR, SNEEKER!

THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING.

THEY SHOULD HAVE HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING THAT WE WERE INFILTRATING TONIGHT OR ANY OTHER NIGHT.

THE HYDRA DOG SOLDIERS HAVE GOT US SURROUNDED.

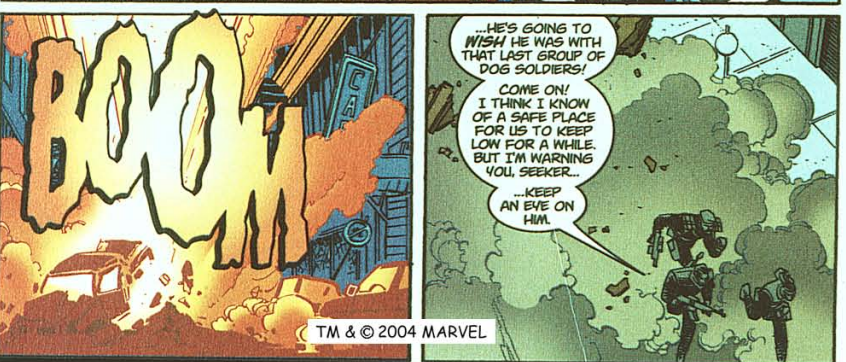
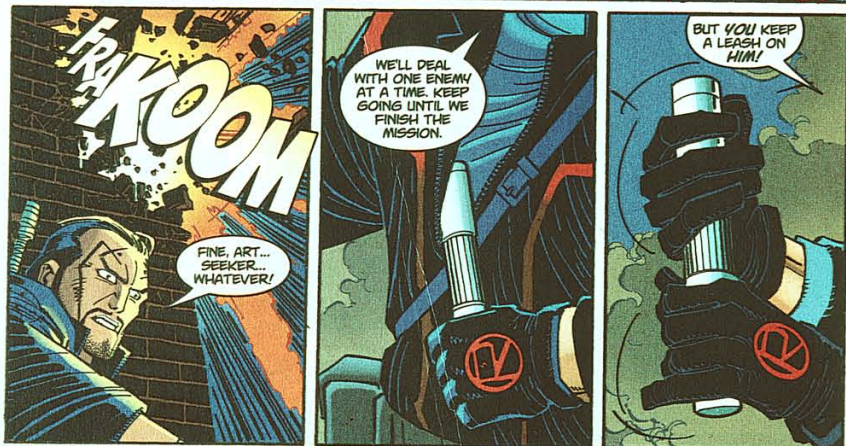
THE MISSION WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SO SECRET —!

SECRET?!

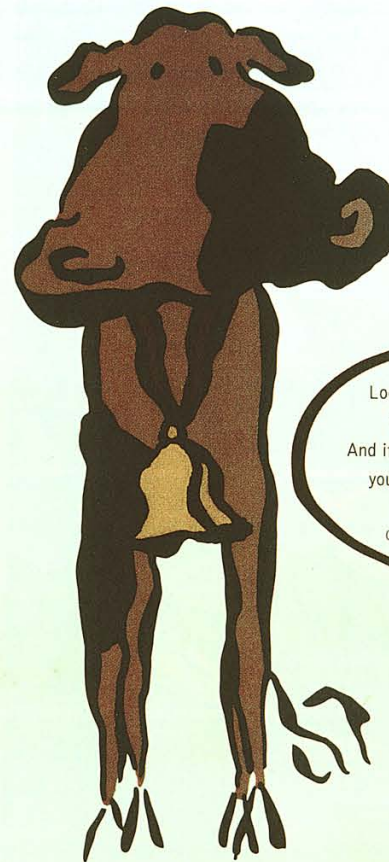
YOU RAN INTELLIGENCE ON THIS MISSION, SENTRY?!

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE SOME SORT OF HOT SHOT COMPUTER WHIZ, BUT I THINK YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER SPY WANNABE WHO COMPROMISED ALL OF OUR —

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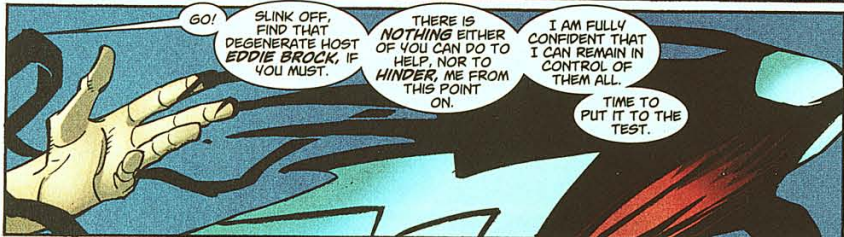
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2. Look under cap to find a foil seal game piece which will indicate a prize or "Please Try Again." If the game piece indicates a prize, print your name, street address and phone number on a 3" x 5" piece of paper and send with winning game piece to: Hershey's Capture the Cow Sweepstakes —Prize Claim, PO Box 127, Riverton, NJ 08077. Grand Prize winner claims must be sent via registered mail. Prize claims must be received by July 25, 2001. All prize claims are subject to verification. Grand Prize winning bottles do not contain syrup. For a set of official rules and additional information, call toll free at 1-877-222-2555 or visit our web site at www.hersheys.com/hershelshideout.

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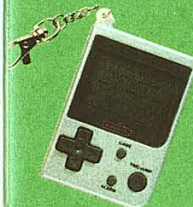
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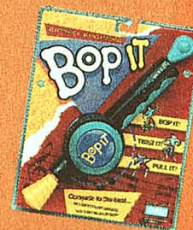
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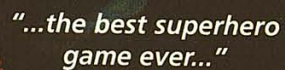
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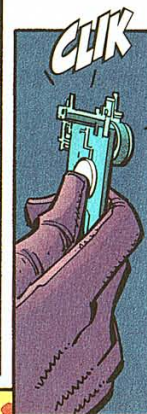
YOU DON'T JUST PLAY IT... YOU LIVE IT



Animated Violence

Screen shots taken from PlayStation® game console gameplay. MARVEL and SPIDER-MAN: TM and © 2000 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. Published and distributed by Activision. Activision is a registered trademark of Activision, Inc. © 2000 Activision, Inc. Licensed by Sony Computer Entertainment America for use with the PlayStation game console. PlayStation and the PlayStation logos are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment, Inc. Nintendo, Nintendo 64, the N logo, Game Boy and Game Boy Color are trademarks of Nintendo of America Inc. © 1989, 1998 Nintendo of America Inc. The ratings logo is a trade mark of the Interactive Digital Software Association. All rights reserved. All other trademarks and trade names are properties of their respective owners.

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For more on the green fiend's return, see Spider-Man: Revenge of the Green Goblin limited series on sale now -- Quick-plug Balf



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MARVEL

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HE PAST.

I'LL HAND IT TO YOU, SENTRY. YOU GOT US IN. NOW LET'S WRAP IT AND BLOW IT UP.

YOU WANT TO DESTROY THIS?

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING AT?

NOPE! AND I CAN'T SAY I CARE.



HE'S RIGHT, SENTRY.

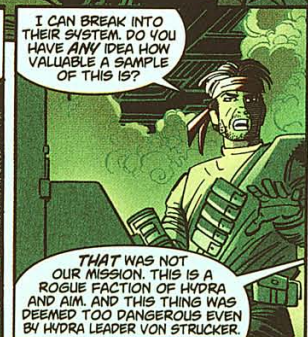
OUR MISSION WAS TO DESTROY THIS INSTALLATION AND MAKE SURE THAT NOTHING BEING DEVELOPED HERE SURVIVED.

HOW CAN YOU BE SO SMALL-MINDED?



THE HYDRA SCIENTISTS WORKING HERE WERE DEVELOPING A BIO-PATHOGEN DERIVED FROM AN ALIEN LIFE FORM.

DID YOU HEAR ME? AN ALIEN!



I CAN BREAK INTO THEIR SYSTEM. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW VALUABLE A SAMPLE OF THIS IS?

THAT WAS NOT OUR MISSION. THIS IS A ROGUE FRACTION OF HYDRA AND AIM. AND THIS THING WAS DEEMED TOO DANGEROUS EVEN BY HYDRA LEADER VON STRUCKER.



ALSO, IT'S NEVER BEEN CONFIRMED THAT ANY OF THIS IS AN ALIEN LIFE FORM.

YOU'RE EXTRAPOLATING, SENTRY. SET THE CHARGES NOW.



CHARGES ARE ALL PLACED AND READY TO BE SET.



THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE OF PLANS, GENTLEMEN.

CLIK



DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT, SENTRY.

WHO ARE YOU WORKING FOR? WHICH SIDE?

YOU ARE SUCH A TRADITIONALIST, ARTHUR.

SIDES? THERE ARE NO SIDES.

PATRIOTISM. HONOR. DUTY. A FOOL'S LEXICON. WINNING IS ALL THAT MATTERS.

DIVING IN THE SERVICE OF YOUR COUNTRY GETS YOU ONLY A FLAG-DRAPED COFFIN AND TAPS. THAT'S NOT ON MY AGENDA.

AND I WILL NOT BE HAMPERED BY THE LIKES OF YOU.



SOMEHOW THERE IS POETIC JUSTICE TO THIS, ARTHUR.

I REQUESTED THAT YOU BE ON THIS MISSION.

I FELT IT WAS TIME TO SETTLE ALL SCORES.

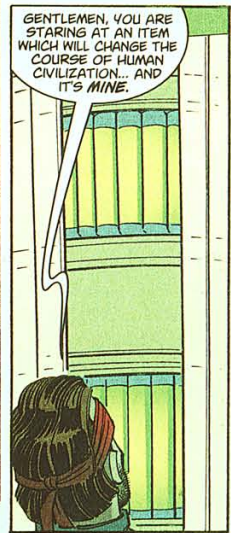
ARE YOU STILL GOING ON ABOUT THAT? IT'S ANCIENT HISTORY.



NOT TO ME.



BY THE WAY, HERE IT IS.



GENTLEMEN, YOU ARE STARING AT AN ITEM WHICH WILL CHANGE THE COURSE OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION. AND IT'S MINE.



A SINGLE VIAL IS ALL THAT I REQUIRE.

THAT'S ALL I NEED. ALL I'D BE ABLE TO TRANSPORT SAFELY.

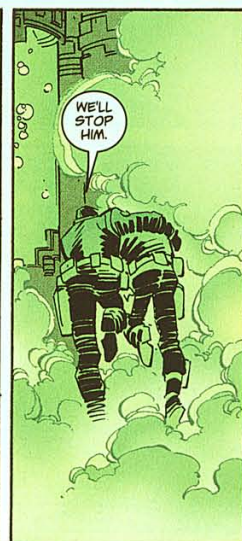


TRANSPORT! THERE IS NOTHING SAFE IN TRANSPORTING THAT! THE SLIGHTEST MISTAKE AND --

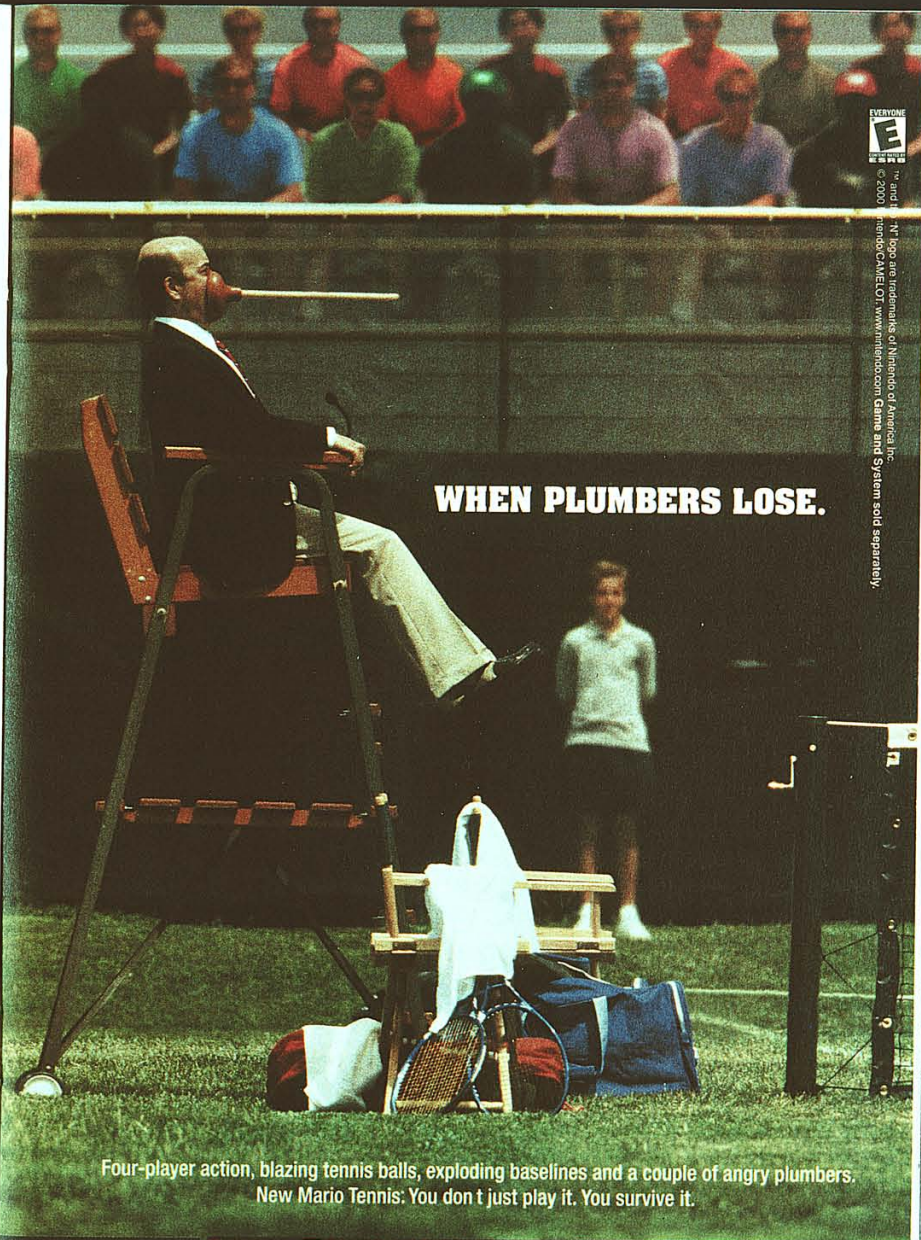


I MAKE NO MISTAKES AND LEAVE NO WITNESSES.

IT'S A SHAME YOUR LITTLE GIRL WILL NEVER GET TO SEE HER DADDY AGAIN, ARTHUR --

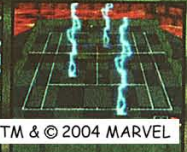


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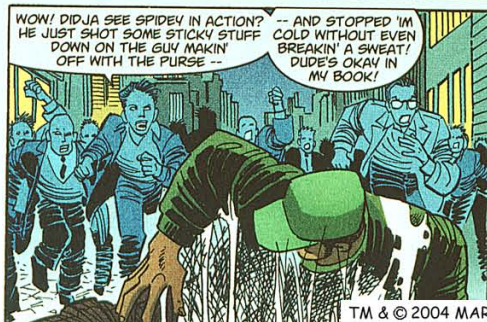
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The Children of the Atom battle the Brood and the Morlocks in this new digest-sized reprint format! By Chris Claremont and Paul Smith!

BISHOP #14

It's Bishop vs. the Chronomancer in a war that results in a startling new direction for the last X-Man! By Joseph Harris and Georges Jeanty!

CAPTAIN AMERICA #35

This is it—the knockdown, no-holds-barred battle between Captain America and his twisted reflection, Protocol! By Dan Jurgens!

CAPTAIN MARVEL #11

In this very special issue, Genis meets his father, the original Captain Mar-Vell—but he's dead, right? By Peter David and Jim Starlin!

INCREDIBLE HULK #20

The green goliath runs head-on into the forces of Ryker—and learns the secret that has driven his obsessed opponent! By Paul Jenkins and Ron Frenz!

IRON FIST / WOLVERINE #1

Will K'un Lun materialize over Tokyo? Everyone's kung-fu fighting in this all-new adventure that mixes martial arts mayhem with mutant mania! By Jay Faerber and Jamal Igle!

PETER PARKER,
SPIDER-MAN #23

Peter Parker and his roommate Randy Robertson are both having weird dreams... but was it just something they ate—or a case of alien abduction? By Paul Jenkins and Mark Buckingham!

PUNISHER / PRANKILLER JANE

The term "bleeding hearts" takes on a new meaning as comics' two most violent vigilantes make a lethal love connection! By Garth Ennis and Joe Jusko!

SENTRY #3

How can you make the world remember you? That's what Bob Reynolds must do figure out when he faces the Hulk and Spider-Man! By Paul Jenkins and Jae Lee!

DARKDEVIL #1

From the pages of SPIDER-GIRL, leaks the mystery man of MC2, Darkdevil! His enigmatic origin begins here! By Tom DeFalco and Ron Frenz!

THUNDERBOLTS #44

Continued from the pages of AVENGERS, the T-Bolts and Earth's Mightiest Heroes stand side-by-side against Count Nefarai! By Fabian Nicieza and Mark Bagley!

X-MAN #69

Transported to another world, Nate Grey comes face-to-face with the X-Man of that reality! By Warren Ellis, Steven Grant and Ariel Olivetti!

X-MEN #106

All of your questions are answered here as the mighty mutants launch a final assault on the fair of the Neo! By Chris Claremont and Leinil Yu.

X-MEN: BLACK SUN #4

Belasco's perverted plans come to fruition in the finale to the X-Men's 25th Anniversary celebration! By Chris Claremont and Pablo Raimondi!

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Remember digests? You know, those small books that contain a bunch of cool comics? We do! That's why we're introducing BACKPACK MARVELS, a series of black-and-white reprints that contain larger-than-life adventures in a format that's small enough to take anywhere! Up first: classic tales starring our most famous characters, Spider-Man and the X-Men! So if you're on the run and need your Marvel fix, then throw a Backpack in your backpack!

Jim Starlin is well known for his grand cosmic sagas. He's also known as the man who killed the original Kree Crusader. Now Starlin returns to pencil Mar-Vell's son, Genis—and Peter David has written a special story that features a father and son reunion! But if Mar-Vell is dead, then how can he be here? Find out in this issue—and you'll also see why Comics International said, "Just buy this and remind yourself how good comics writing can be!"



CAPTAIN MARVEL #11

Steve's
SOAPBOX

When strangers learn I'm a writer, they often ask what I write. I like to watch their reaction when I say, "Soapboxes." They look at me as if I don't have both ears in the water as they mumble, "Did you say Soapboxes?" That's when I really drive 'em batty by replying, "Oh yeah, they're my specialty. I'm the only professional Soapboxer I know!" That gets rid of them real fast. Hey, a guy who sits at a computer most of the day has to do something for kicks, right? And now for the heavy stuff...

Here's Ben Cassaday of Anderson, IN, who offers a paean of praise for the Silver Surfer... "Of all your creations, my favorite is the Silver Surfer. How did you think of such a peace-loving man becoming the herald of Galactus?" Jack Kirby's the guy who really created him, Ben. All I did was give him his gestalt, his personality. I wanted him to be peace-loving because I wanted him to represent everything that's best about the human race, even though we humans ourselves seem to find it so difficult to attain the great qualities that the Surfer knows are within us.

Hey, Oliver M. Villar of Jacksonville, FL, really shakes me up with this one...

"I found Peter Parker's middle name! In WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #19, on page 15, Peter draws a lady a birth certificate that says 'Peter Benjamin Parker'."

Wow! You sure earned your No-Prize with this one, Olvie! Imagine telling me something about Spidey that I didn't know! The mind doth verily boggle!

All the way from across the ocean, Pritpal Bhagath of Berks, England, asks...

"If you could be a mutant, who would you be and what powers would you have?"

I'd have to create a brand new character, Prit, because what I'd want doesn't yet exist! I'd want someone who could hold back time, so that I'd have enough time to write comics again in addition to my other work. Wouldn't that be a boot!

Speaking of time, True Believers, we're out of it now—and space, as well. Till next ish, Keep the Faith!

Excelsior!

Stan Lee

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THE
SPIDER-MAN
WEB

Dear Spider's Web,

In AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #19, something I had hoped for for years finally happened: Peter showed Venom sympathy. Even if it was just for one page, Peter and Eddie buried the hatchet. Not a "you-don't-come-after-me-and-I-won't-come-after-you" deal like in issue #375 of ASM Volume 1, but a real declaration of peace.

Eddie's greatest sins before he bonded with the symbiote were nothing more than shoddy journalism and, at the very worst, obstruction of justice. Overall, he was a decent guy and didn't deserve the hand fate dealt him. I've always pitied Mr. Brock. For the longest time, I had hoped that Eddie would get some professional help and realize that Spider-Man never intended to wreck his life, or that Peter would be a big enough man to say "Eddie, I'm sorry. I had to stop the Sin Eater, but I never meant for you to be hurt in the process." It looked like maybe, just maybe, Eddie was on the verge of forgiving Peter, and he had somehow begun to regain his sanity and get his life back on track.

Any hope of this was destroyed on the next page, and now Venom's back to his old self. I'm genuinely sad and even a little angry that after such a long time and after Eddie made such incredible progress, it ended up being all for nothing. Won't this guy ever catch a break? I felt the same way when the Scorpion resolved to turn his life around in the early '90s and wasn't successful. To me, one of the most tragic things in real life or in the comic books is a screwed-up person tries to change for the better and fails.

I don't want the old, psychotic Venom back. As much as I like to see Spidey and Venom slug it out, I would much rather see a reconciliation between the two. At the moment, both Peter and Eddie have lost their wives, giving them something in common. Peter can still reason with Eddie rather than fighting, let him that he feels the same pain Brock does. It's not too late for Eddie to change, and Peter Parker will be the one who either helps him make that change and regain his humanity or sends him into another downward spiral, depending on how he handles Venom in their future meetings.

And if it's the latter, if Eddie begins to obsess about killing Spider-Man again and his life goes right back down the toilet, then I'm really gonna hate you guys.

Rob Brown
Oakville, Ontario
CANADA

Thanks for the letter, Rob. Unfortunately, it sounds as if we're not going to fare too well in your regard. While it certainly isn't our attempt to portray Eddie Brock as a one-note character, we're not sure we see Peter and him reconciling anytime soon. You can say what you will about Eddie "not catching a break," but the fact of the matter is that he has made the choices that have made him a villain. Venom is a killer, and although we may have touched on recent similarities between him and Peter in the events of their lives, they currently don't look to be mending fences anytime soon. Hopefully, however, we can maintain that enmity without reverting Venom to the simplistic portrayal you seem to want to avoid.

Dear Spider's Web,

The biggest news regarding AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #19, as far as I'm concerned, is that Erik Larsen is back drawing Spidey again. Having picked up his first run on ASM back when they first hit the shelves, and following his other work ever since, it was a real treat to see Erik hit the web-man again. I wouldn't want to see him on this title every month (I'm enjoying Savage Dragon too

much), but this three-month return performance should be fun while it lasts.

As for the writing, while most of Howard Mackie's Spidey work since the reboot has been, in my opinion, rather lackluster, I've noticed a marked improvement in his scripting over the last few months. Some of Spider-Man's lines (such as the quick ID of the peppermint gum on the sidewalk once he'd stopped his fall) actually made me snicker out loud, which is something that hasn't happened in awhile.

The fight with Venom was exciting visually, if not exactly thrilling plot-wise. Venom has never needed much reason to pound on Spidey, and that's exactly what we got this issue: not much reason. As another reader pointed out, though, at least Venom now has a new motivation for wanting Spider-Man dead. The "Sin-Eater" angle was getting kind of old.

I'm officially interested in Jill Stacy again. Gwen's cousin has been suffering since her introduction, from the same "boring good girl" malaise that was Gwen's own problem shortly before her death. Now she's parting all night, showing up at Aunt May's house hammered, and crashing on the couch in one of MJ's nightshirts? Go, girl! I'm still not crazy about her more-than-friendly flirtations with Peter, but I'm definitely more interested in what happens to her now.

In short, ASM seems to be on the right track, at long last. I look forward to the rest of Erik's run and the return of John Romita, Jr. with #22. Can't wait to see what you guys have cooking for #25.

Russ Anderson
Baltimore, MD

"Go, girl?" Shall we take this as an endorsement of Jill's recent behavior, Russ? For shame! You know, the next time people complain about the downfall of morals in society, we will point the finger squarely at you, sir. Well, after Ralf, that is.

Looking forward to #25, eh? And with good reason, we might add. Not only is a refreshed John Jr. on tap for that double-sized epic, but it also features that maniacal ol' Green Goblin as if you couldn't figure that one out by now. It's the dovetailing of events in this mag, PETER PARKER: REVENGE OF THE GREEN GOBLIN limited series. It's gonna be a doozy, so don't you dare miss it!

Dear Spider's Web,

Hey, Guys! This letter doesn't have much to do with the issue I just read (AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #19, which was great by the way), but it suddenly occurred to me that I have not officially chimed in on the MJ situation. In my opinion she should stay deceased, or at least if she is brought back, she and Peter should separate and eventually divorce. She is one of my favorite supporting characters in all of comics and the private moments spent between MJ and our hero will always be treasured by the fans, yet it has become apparent over the last few issues (which were excellent) that one of the ingredients missing from the Spider books over the last decade is the sexual tension and dating angst so prevalent for so many years. You have the chance to tell a touching breakup tale between Peter and Mary Jane and also restore the status quo of Spidey. Please take advantage of this rare opportunity.

As for the aforementioned issue #19, the Jill Stacy plot continues to thicken. I suspect that she may have been the woman climbing out the window of the crackhouse in issue #17. Hopefully, Pete can help her come to her senses before it's too late. That last page was a real shocker as well. Spidey had better watch his back.

Thanks for listening, and as always... Make Mine Marvel!!!

Terence Connors P.M.M.
Rochelle Park, NJ

Well, at least you didn't encourage Jill's seeming fall into degradation (sheesh—some people!). A rare call, however, for MJ to be declared definitively and irrevocably dead. Interesting...are you hankering for some angry Spidey fans to write in with all manner of insults and barbs? You're a brave man, Terence, braver than most. Prepare yourself for the epistolary lashing that is sure to commence!

Dear Ralf,

Certainly, Howard Mackie understands how life's greatest tragedies spring from miscommunication.

I enjoyed AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #19 much more than I expected to, mostly because I've never had much interest in Venom. However, showing me the human face of this villain helped to give me a bit more insight behind the man as opposed to the symbiote, which seems to garner most of the attention. Using Eddie Brock to parallel Peter's own struggle with missing Mary Jane gave it an extra impact and one I found completely plausible.

So often, it's easy to ignore the problems of others, even when they mirror your own. Having Spider-Man stop the fight to actually talk to Venom was a phenomenal step. I admired Peter's compassion. I also appreciated Brock's rationality in accepting Peter's terms. This is a rare thing in comics especially where heroes and villains are concerned. It helps to remind us all, "There but for the grace of God..."

It also made the ending far more tragic. Certainly, it's terrible that Brock's wife committed suicide. But Venom's misunderstanding of what was truly true to her makes it all the more so.

Thanks for helping me to understand Brock and better explain the source of his antipathy towards Spider-Man. I think Venom will be a far more interesting villain from this point on for me.

Scott W. Myers
Charleston, SC
swmyers@aol.com

Thanks, Scott. We aim to please. And if we breathed new life into a villain who many (like you) feel has outgrown his original motivation, then we can consider ASM #19 a job well done. And trust us, with Ralf at the helm, that's not a common experience!

NEXT ISSUE:

FINALLY... THE LONG-AWAITED SHOWDOWN WITH SENATOR WARD IS HERE! SPIDEY, RALPH STARKE AND THE RANGER RACE TO STOP WORLDWIDE DESTRUCTION AMIDST THE CHAOS OF MAXIMUM SECURITY! WILL ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE STACY CLAN LOSE HIS LIFE? FIND OUT HERE NEXT MONTH IN A PAGE-TURNING NAIL-BITER, COURTESY OF HOWARD MACKIE, JOHN ROMITA JR. AND GUEST INKER GANDY ELLIOTT. RALF, MEANWHILE, WILL BE BITING HIS NAILS, WAITING TO SEE IF HE HAS A JOB FOR ANOTHER MONTH.

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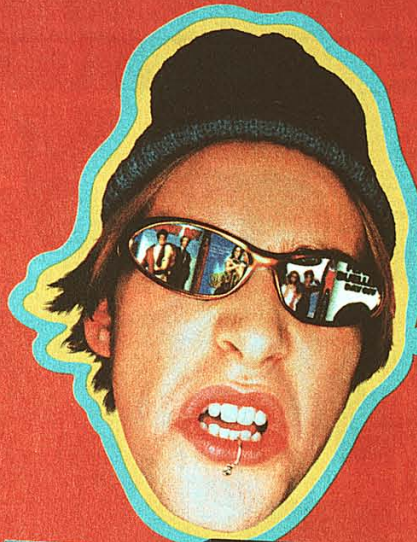


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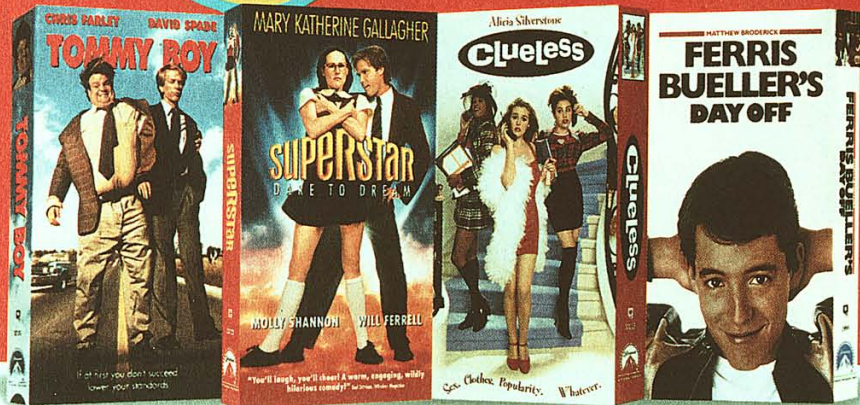


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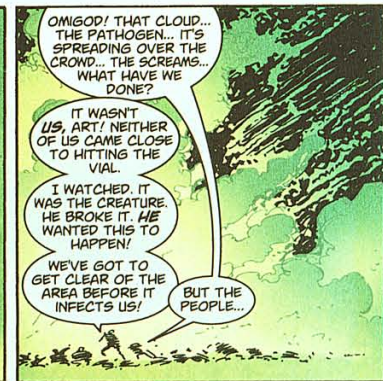
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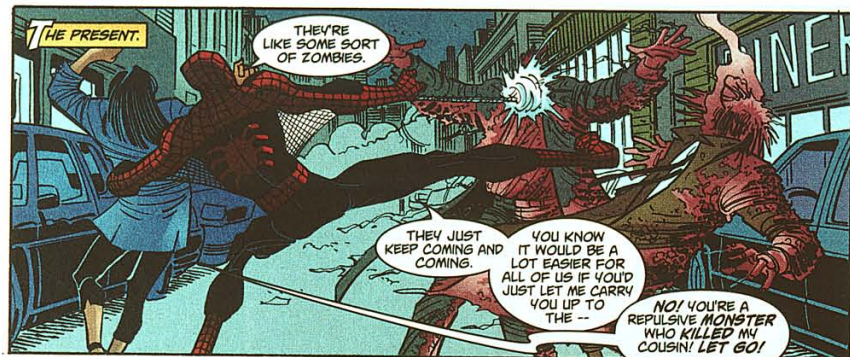
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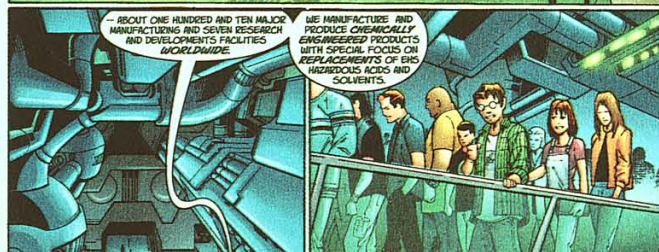
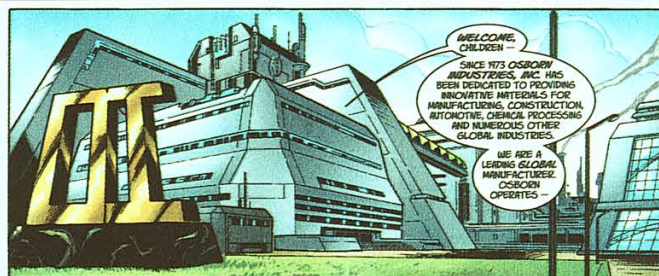
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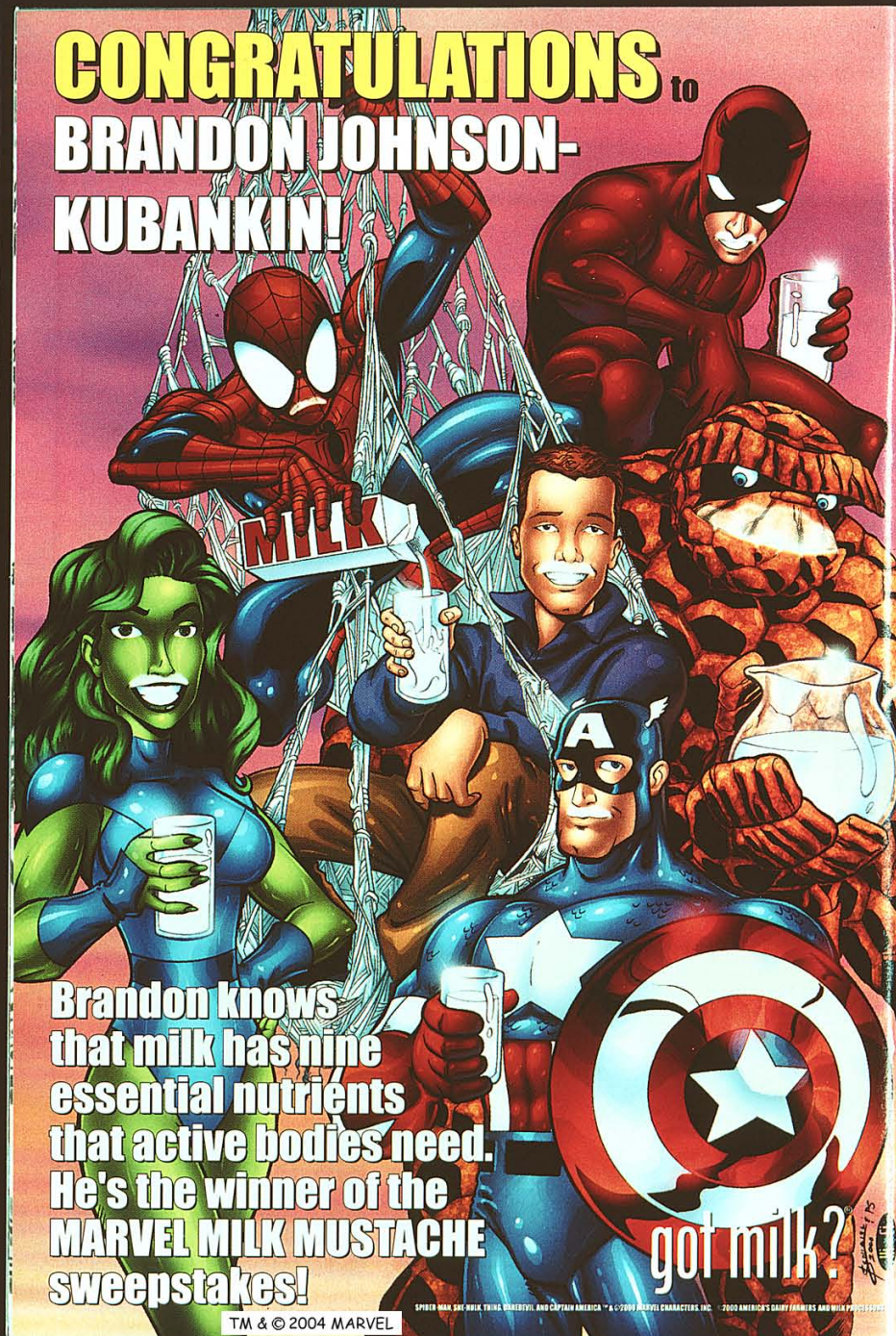


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